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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000315

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SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PM

TOPOLANEK

Classified By: Ambassador Richard Gruber for reasons 1.4 b+d

¶1. (C) Summary: Czech PM Topolanek told Ambassador March 23 that the Czech diplomatic note on missile defense (MD) is on track to be delivered by the end of next week. The Czechs intend to amplify their public debate after this weekend's opposition party congress, and are looking forward to the visit of an MDA technical expert to provide much-needed technical information on the proposed radar. On visas, the Czechs are more concerned about how the process is progressing among EU members than in the Congress. The two also discussed intellectual property rights, reform of the Czech intelligence services, and concerns about Russian influence in Central Europe. End summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador met with Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek on March 23. Topolanek was accompanied by Czech Ambassador to the U.S. Petr Kolar (in Prague for a meeting of NATO Ambassadors). The meeting was at the Ambassador's request primarily to review missile defense.

¶3. (C) On missile defense, Topolanek started by stating that the process is in good shape. He noted that he had just reviewed the draft Czech diplomatic note and had no concerns. The note will be considered at the next weekly meeting of the government, on March 28, and Topolanek expects it will be delivered to the embassy by the end of that week. He noted that the Czech government had intentionally kept the public debate on MD quiet in recent weeks, because of the opposition CSSD Party Congress that begins on March 23. After the Congress is over, and the dipnote delivered, Topolanek said the public effort would become more active. He added that he had asked FM Schwarzenberg to suggest a new individual who would coordinate the public effort, and that this person would report directly to the Prime Minister. Topolanek expressed great satisfaction with cooperation with the embassy to date, and was especially pleased to know that an MDA technical expert would be available next month to provide additional information to the parliament and local officials.

(Note: we understand that the date for this visit is now in question; this technical expertise is a top priority for Czech and embassy efforts to answer questions from Czech experts, i.e., those who will be carrying out the Czech education efforts, and embassy urges that it be rescheduled as soon as possible.) Topolanek added that the GOCR is already discussing the best way to take advantage of the planned visit by MDA Director Obering next month. One option is to have General Obering meet with the full National Security Council, which consists of the President, PM, many cabinet members, and the heads of several key parliamentary committees. (Note: in a subsequent meeting at the MFA, we learned that the Czech NSC intends to meet on April 3 and will formally "invite" General Obering to attend an NSC meeting on April 23, therefore the Czechs have requested that

the USG not/not make public the date of General Obering's visit prior to this "invitation.")

¶14. (C) Commenting on the European debate over MD, Topolanek repeated that he had told the NATO Secretary General that he has no problem with the issue being debated within NATO, but that does not equate to giving any individual European state the right to pass approval on the project. He noted that the Czech Republic had never been asked to say yes or no to any of the dozens of U.S. facilities located in other European countries. He added that the government does not see any basis for debating this within the EU.

¶15. (C) Ambassador noted that CSSD Chairman Paroubek had invited him to address the CSSD Congress on March 23, primarily to discuss MD. Kolar said that he had met with Paroubek the day before and found him to be very realistic on MD and ready to "keep the door open." (Note: Ambassador met Paroubek on March 20 and heard the same.) Kolar said that Paroubek was aware that some MD opponents within CSSD, led by Deputy Party Chair Zaoralek, were planning to propose that the Congress approve a resolution that would put CSSD firmly against the MD radar, and that Paroubek himself opposed this effort. Topolanek agreed that Paroubek personally is pro-American and wants to do the right thing, but that it was hard to predict what political bargains he might need to strike. Topolanek also supported the idea that Paroubek visit the United States this year to learn more about MD. He said that even though he himself is planning an official visit to the U.S. in the second half of 2007, he had no objections to a trip by Paroubek.

¶16. (C) Topolanek passed up the opportunity to discuss the visa situation in any detail. Ambassador stressed that it

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was impossible to determine what the final form of legislation would be, or when it would be approved. Topolanek said he understood the situation regarding legislation. He thought the more important issue was working things out among European states. Kolar, in a separate meeting with Ambassador on March 22, complained that the German Presidency was trying to act on behalf of all 27 EU partners, but refusing to cooperate with the countries that are currently outside the VWP. The German negotiating team in Washington consists of the Troika (all current VWP members) and the Commission. He complained that the German Ambassador last week sent a letter to all Members of Congress on behalf of the 27 that had not been cleared by the other members states, and which the Czechs felt was very problematic.

¶17. (S/NF) Ambassador briefed Topolanek on a discussion he had had with Interior Minister Langer on March 22 in which the Ambassador had described the overall bilateral intelligence relationship as excellent, but noted that cooperation had slowed in recent months due to personnel shifts Topolanek introduced (firing the head of the civilian external service, UZSI, and merging it with the civilian domestic service, BIS). Topolanek interrupted and said he understood the problem completely. He said that personnel changes were necessary in order to effect a long-overdue reorganization of the intelligence community, which was still based on structures dating from the communist period. He pointed out that a new structure would be decided in "weeks, not months," that these would be "changes for the better," and that there would be "no political games played with the services." Topolanek did not give details, but said the reform would constitute a "full housecleaning" of the services and create separate defensive and offensive services, and added that there would be more direct oversight from the Prime Minister.

¶18. (S/NF) Separately Topolanek offered a cryptic reference to intelligence reports he had recently read that included unspecified "threats" from Russian intelligence. Topolanek said he could not divulge any specifics about these "threats"

except to say that they were picked up by "a Czech Ambassador." Topolanek said that based on these reports he is convinced there is an increase in "activity" in the Czech Republic. He went on to note that Central European countries, located between Germany and Russia, have always suffered as a result of geography, and that this is "one reason why the MD project is so important." Topolanek also noted that he remains very concerned about the planned sale of ConocoPhillips operations in Central Europe, likely to Lukoil, as this will increase Russian influence in the region.

¶9. (SBU) Ambassador closed by noting USG concern about allegations of intellectual property piracy at markets along the Czech border, noting that he had also discussed the problem this week with the Ministers of Interior, Justice, and Trade and Industry. He urged Topolanek to oversee a more pro-active GOCR effort to counter IPR violations. Topolanek noted that the Czech legal framework was strong, and that the police had recently stepped up operations at the border markets, but stressed that this would be a priority going forward.

GRABER